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A SCENE ON THE COAST OF AFRICA.



“The miserable condition, too, of the chained slaves in his father's baracoons excited his sympathy.” p. 8.

# KMANYO.



WRITTEN FOR THE AMERICAN SUNDAY-SCHOOL UNION.

PHILADELPHIA:

AMERICAN SUNDAY-SCHOOL UNION,

No. 146 CHESTNUT STREET.


NEW YORK: No. 147 NASSAU ST.....BOSTON: No. 9 CORNHILL.

LOUISVILLE: No. 103 FOURTH ST.

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# K M A N Y O.

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## CHAPTER I.

KMANYO, or John Wesley, was the youngest son of a noted chief of the Bassa tribe, on the western coast of Africa. This chief was called the Prince of Cess. He was considered a very wise man, and was treated with great deference and respect by his subjects. He was an indefatigable native slaver, or slave-merchant, and exhibited great shrewdness in capturing victims for the slave trade. Yet he was but an ignorant heathen, and his intercourse with foreigners made him only more vicious and degraded. Many slave-dealers from foreign lands, but chiefly from Spain, dwelt within his borders. They encouraged him to traffic in human flesh, and to live in continual war with the less powerful tribes about him, that they

might insure the profits of the business. The result was, that thousands of poor Africans were annually shipped by the agents of this chief, to be sold into foreign bondage. Under such influences, combined with the heathenish customs of his people, were the early days of Kmanyo passed. He grew up unaccustomed to restraint or reproof, learning, from the character and example of his people, that artful lies and cunning thefts, rather than any thing really praiseworthy, would gain the applause of his countrymen.

He had a mother ; but she too was a heathen. She never taught her little son the name of Jesus ; for she had never heard that blessed name herself. She never kneeled with him to pray ; for she knew not the true God, who hears prayer. Her trust and confidence was in a little horn filled with gunpowder and palm-oil, called *gregree*, prepared by men who deceived the people, and made them think they had great spiritual power. Such foolish things were worn as charms to preserve them from danger, and from what they called “witch-palavers,” and in these they trust for protection, as the Christian trusts in God.



Kmanyo did not reverence his mother : for a Bassa woman is considered inferior to her son, even when he is a mere child ; and she is entirely forbidden, by the laws of her tribe, from enforcing obedience by punishment. As a natural consequence, he was violent and self-willed towards his mother, often treating her with indignity, and uttering the most bitter curses upon her.

When conversing of this, years afterwards, Kmanyo said his mother would at such times reprove him for his wickedness, and tell him he would be cursed by the Great Spirit, if he cursed her. But although he was very young, he does not seem to have been conscious of any reproving monitor within ; for he would run away from her, scornfully repeating, “ You are only a woman ! ” He was without natural affection.\* Still he seems not to have been entirely destitute of kind feelings ; for his mother’s death caused him much sorrow, and the miserable condition too, of the chained slaves in his father’s baracoons,† excited his sympathy, and proved that the germ of benevolence

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\* Rom. i. 31.

† Or *Forts*, which probably served as market-places.

might exist even in that heathenish heart of his. These slaves were often hungry and thirsty, and Kmanyo knew and pitied their distress, and tried to relieve them. He would steal rice and other fruits, and distribute them to the needy, and sometimes go without his own "palm-oil and rice," that a favourite slave might enjoy it.

His father died when he was a very little boy. As this people are very superstitious, and do not believe that any person can die a natural death, they immediately began to inquire who had caused the death of the prince. On some occasions they say that "some person or persons have made witch for the dead," meaning that by some supernatural power they have bewitched the victim, and, being much stronger than he, finally killed him! Hence, it is common when one is sick, for the doctor or "gregree man" to resort to various charms and sorceries, to counteract the power of the witch. As soon as the prince was dead, the "gregree men," or as they are sometimes termed "the fetish men," were summoned to detect the witch or witches who had caused this great calamity.



A drink made of "saucy wood," called their "tree of justice," which often proves a deadly poison, was given to many victims, and it was fatal to the larger number. Hence it was inferred by the now rejoicing people, that they had destroyed the doers of the mischief!

Probably these gregree men, who are very shrewd and wicked, added, as is their custom in seasons of peculiar excitement, other poisonous ingredients to insure the desired effect. Truly "the tender mercies of the heathen are cruelty!"

After the death of his father, the eldest son assumed his title and office, and became the guardian of Kmanyo. This chief walked in the steps of his father, and zealously followed the slave-trade. Kmanyo was placed with the Spanish trader, that he might learn enough of that language to make him useful in that shameful traffic when he should grow up. But God directed the path of this young African, and defeated through his own agency his brother's cherished plans. He had an immortal spirit, and the Saviour designed to make him a monument of redeeming love.

To settle some difficulties existing between

his people and the colonists, the prince resolved on a visit to the Governor of Liberia, then Governor Matthias, (a white man,) who resided at Bassa Cove, a colonial settlement about twenty miles north. On the appointed day, armed with his gun and cutlass, and with a few native attendants, he commenced his walk. As this country is wild and uncultivated, without roads, or any conveniences for travelling, the inhabitants prosecute their journeys on foot.

He was accompanied by his young brother, whose bright intelligent countenance attracted the notice of the governor. At the close of the conference, the African chief seemed much pleased with the white ruler ; and expressed his delight by assuring him, if he would visit his town, he would give him many presents. The governor asked him if he would let his little brother stay with him, to study books and to learn the English language. To which the chief replied, that "he wanted the boy to talk as the governor did ; and as the governor was a very fine man, he would allow the boy to stay for a season."

The wily chief knew that a knowledge of foreign languages, especially the English,

would make his brother more valuable to himself.

The American Baptist Mission was located at this time at Edina, in the vicinity of the governor's country residence. Soon after he took charge of the lad, he placed him as his beneficiary at this institution, where he supported him one year, giving him, at the same time, the name of JOHN WESLEY.

We can scarcely imagine the entire change that was made in the life of this young African child. Unused to the customs of civilized life, especially to any discipline of mind or body, he was entirely unprepared for his new position.

In order to give the reader some idea of his early habits, I will describe a Bassa town, for Kmanyo belonged to a tribe of people called the Bassas.

The country where the Bassa people reside includes a portion of land on the west coast of Africa, lying between the fifth and seventh degrees north of the equator. It is supposed to extend about seventy miles from the sea, and is estimated to contain about a hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants. These people are

all degraded heathens. Liberia is now occupying some portion of their territory, by purchase, and where this is the case, the natives go back to more inland towns.

The people live in small villages, containing from twenty to two hundred houses. These villages are very unlike the beautiful and attractive towns of our country. No pretty white cottage peeps out from between the green trees, nor is there any taste displayed about their dwellings. The houses are made by upright poles, set closely together in the ground, to form a square; the crevices being filled with a kind of mud that hardens like cement. Others are covered with matting made of bamboo, which can easily be cut through with a pair of scissors. The roofs project, and are covered with thatch. They are curious inside, being principally small sleeping apartments, many of them similar to the berths in a ship.

These are seldom used, except for sleeping or storage; as the people live mostly in the open air. They have no furniture, save now and then, a small stool, a chest, a bit of matting, and a leopard's skin.



Kmanyo's father had a good English house and good furniture, which he kept mostly for his foreign company.

They have no broad streets nor convenient side-walks, but in their stead grass-grown paths, and wild scenery of waving palms and other tropical trees. The natives are extremely indolent, and spend their time mostly in foolish plays, or in a species of gambling, or in dancing, smoking, fishing, and sometimes hunting. They know nothing of the holy character of God, nor of their duties to him; consequently there is a great deal of vice and wretchedness among them.

From such a home was Kmanyo taken, and one can readily imagine the contrast between the life he there lived, and that which he was to lead at a Christian mission-station. For a time he went about dressed in his native costume, with a chain around his neck, and a "gregree" attached to it, a string of beads about his waist, and a cloth confined closely about his body. But by-and-by his attire was changed to one more in conformity to civilized habits.

Like most of the pupils, when first obliged

to do any work, he would say "Do they think me a slave that they require this of me?" But he soon became tractable, and his prompt obedience and gentle manners gained the love of the missionaries and of his companions, with whom he seems to have been quite a favourite. They called him Prince, which seems to have been his most familiar title, in his own home, in honour of his father; and by this title he was generally known at the mission.

Soon Kmanyo's native superstitions and prejudices began to yield. His heart was touched with the truths of the gospel; and especially that God so loved the world as to give his Son to die for sinners. He threw away his gregree, for he ceased to believe in it; and eagerly listened to God's word. He was a quick scholar, but his progress was retarded: for his brother repeatedly took him from school, fearing that he would be too much influenced by his new care-takers; or, as he said, that he would "subby too much of the white man's God-palaver." Besides, he seems to have been exceedingly fond of his young brother, and desired to have him as his pet companion.

But even at this early period he seems to

have been deeply anxious for his soul's salvation; and his teachers were encouraged to hope that he would become one of the Saviour's followers. The temptations to go back from seeking after God are very great in a heathen land; even though within the influence of a Christian mission. Early habits and customs have a mighty influence, and native superstitions weave around them a web from which it is hard to extricate themselves. They are bound as with a spell, and constant intercourse with heathenism serves to strengthen its power.

One of the missionaries thus describes Kmanyo at this time :—

“He was active, cheerful and interesting, and a very tender-hearted boy. When he began to read in the English Testament, he, with others, would come into the house, at the close of school, for some one to hear them read, to see if they had made any improvement. I often took this opportunity to question them about what they read; and I always found him and one other (who is now a Christian) so sensitive as to be soon affected to tears. When I have been ill, as soon as school was out, he would run to my chamber, and, with all the

affection of a child, earnestly ask how I was. When he has come to me alone, I have often pressed on his young mind the importance of loving God and Jesus Christ, the blessed Saviour, and as often as I spoke he would invariably weep. His disposition was cheerful and happy. I have before me distinctly his little form and bright face. In the Bible-class, he ever listened with eager interest and attention; and when the sufferings of Christ were described, he would be subdued to tears. For some time he used to steal away alone for prayer."

Kmanyo was at first amazed at the strange things he heard, and he could only wonder at their novelty. His fears were excited when he heard of the almighty power of God, of his purity, his omniscience and strict justice. But the story of the love of Christ touched his young heart. His conscience accused him of sinfulness: he felt condemned, and he readily listened to the word of God, with apparently as deep a conviction of its truth as if he had always lived in a Christian land.

The following is probably his first attempt



at letter-writing. It was addressed to one of the missionaries in the country :—

*Edina, September 19.*

DEAR FATHER :—I take this opportunity to write to you. Mr. Clarke and Mamma Clarke tell us we God palaver ; and I be going to pray to God for bad thing I do. My father Mr. Duy teach us well ; and I can cipher Long Division. Mr. Clarke have nineteen boys go to school. My father, I want to see you. What time you go come ? Mr. Crocker, I glad for go to school. JOHN WESLEY.

As a war was expected between the inhabitants of the prince's country and another people, the prince sent to the mission for his young brother : it being customary for the people of this tribe to call home all their absent ones before a war commences. Kmanyo was exceedingly averse to leaving his new and happy home ; and his studies, which were very dear to him ; and, more than all, he loved the truths which he heard explained from God's word. He refused to go with his friends, but they would not return without him. His kind

teachers interceded for him, but it was all in vain.

His brother placed him with a Spaniard, well known on that coast as a notorious slave-dealer. Here he felt like a captive, and panted for deliverance, but his brother was deaf to all his supplications. In this situation he acquired some knowledge of the Spanish language, and as he was quite a pet of the slave-dealer, he took some pains to teach him to read in his books. His situation was most unfavourable to his moral character, and perhaps would have proved fatal, had not the remembrance of what he had heard at the mission, of God's knowledge of him, and of his accountability to God for all his acts, restrained him.

During this time he had the prayers of the missionaries. The Spaniards having been disturbed by the foreign ships of war, and obliged for a season to break up their establishment, Kmanyo was again returned to his brother.

It was now about three years since he was taken from the mission. It happened about this time that Mr. Clarke, in one of his preaching tours, visited the place where the prince lived, and there preached. The prince then

gave him permission to take his brother home with him. So kindly was God's providence manifested in this young African's history. He was around his path for good, and did not leave him to the power of temptation, but answered his desire to return to his Christian friends. His prospects for future life were much better than most of his young countrymen, though it would not have been strange if he had preferred to remain among his kindred, indulged and self-indulging. But the Lord was mindful of him, and caused him to hear a voice in his heart, which, as a gentle monitor, reproved his errors, and pointed him to the better path.

A simple incident, which soon after occurred, gave a new direction to his life. In the latter part of 1845, nearly two years after his return to the mission, a meeting of Baptist churches was to be held at Monrovia, a mission settlement. Some of the pupils of the mission school had obtained the consent of their teacher to attend. It was a long distance, (say seventy miles,) that they were to travel, and all the way on the beach. Our young friend was anxious to be one of the number, and begged hard that

he might join his companions. But it was not thought advisable, and he was urged to yield his desires to the will of his guardians. It was a hard struggle, but he conquered himself so nobly that it was agreed that at some favourable opportunity he should be rewarded.



## CHAPTER II.

THE year 1846 opened with favourable prospects for the mission. A spirit of inquiry was abroad. The word preached seemed to be affecting the hearts both of the adult natives and the children of the school.

The eldest boys, who had been the subject of many prayers, appeared to feel the guilt of their situation while living neglectful of the great salvation, and there was a manifest change in their deportment. They set apart a time for special prayer, that God would give them his Holy Spirit, and bring them to a knowledge of himself. Kmanyo was a regular attendant at this meeting, and his sad countenance daily witnessed the anxiety that burdened his spirit. It is believed that all the boys who were concerned in establishing this meeting have since become heirs of the grace of God. The Bible was the constant study of these youth, and it was a pleasing sight to see



them seated together in groups on their playground, or on seats constructed around their bamboo houses, searching the Scriptures, which were able to make them wise unto salvation. This state of things occasioned much joy and gratitude in the hearts of the missionaries; the more because many of the pupils, during the preceding year, had caused them much sorrow and despondency.

At this interesting season a sea voyage was deemed necessary to restore the enfeebled health of the teachers.

As it now seemed the favourable opportunity to reward Kmanyo for his former self-denial, he was chosen as the attendant and companion of the voyage, though many others begged this privilege, who would otherwise have been preferred to him. They intended to sail about one thousand miles down the coast, and to visit some of the mission stations.

Sickness detained them two weeks at Cape Coast, where the English Wesleyans have a prosperous mission. It is about six hundred miles south of Bassa, and so unlike that part of the country, that Kmanyo felt that he was in a strange land. Every thing wore a foreign

aspect; but there appeared a strange comingling of civilized with heathenish customs. Large English houses and the mud dwellings of the natives stood side by side: grounds laid out in neatness and beauty; and adjoining them the wild, uncultivated bush-land of Africa. Here, too, were hundreds of natives dressed in English attire, in strange contrast with their country costume. Kmanyo did not then realize that he had come to take a view of the place of his death: for here it was that, two years afterwards, he found his grave.

Not a sparrow falls to the ground without the knowledge of our heavenly Father. His kind care was exhibited in the life of Kmanyo. He guided him to a Christian mission, was constantly about his path, and finally, we have reason to believe, brought him to a saving knowledge of himself.

When again on ship-board, Kmanyo begged that he might be called John Wesley, and his familiar name of Prince be dropped, as he thought it implied an honour which he did not covet. His request was acceded to, and John Wesley became his most common name.

After sailing about one hundred miles fur-

ther, the illness of one of their number obliged them to land at Accra, a settlement belonging to the English government. The natives, whom they found here, were more industrious and ingenious than most of the more northern tribes. They work gold neatly, weave pretty baskets, make useful ivory combs, and with little spindles manufacture even elegant cloths for table coverings, or for wear. Besides all this, they pay more attention to dress. But in their ways they are not better, but are probably worse people than their northern neighbours, because the vices of civilized lands have been more freely spread among them. Wicked men from Christian countries have gone there to make money; and, in order to do so, have placed themselves on a level with the heathen, and their influence has made them tenfold worse than before.

Foreign vessels carry to those shores large quantities of ardent spirits, and the town echoes with the noise of the revelry of the inhabitants, while the poison lasts. Thus Satan is ever at work to make the heathen more sinful in their blindness, employing for this purpose his agents and tools from civilized and



even Christian lands. If the church of Christ were but as much interested in the promotion of *his* cause as the men of the world are in theirs, what a different scene would the world present!

It was decided at Accra that the invalid missionary must return to the United States, and, after some deliberation, it was thought best that John should accompany her, and in that Christian land prepare himself for greater usefulness among his own benighted people.

Some days previous to this decision, he had seemed deeply serious, and was often found in tears. One time he was questioned regarding his sadness,—whether he was pining for his native home, or mourning over his sins against God?

He could not reply; but, drawing from his pocket a printed sheet, which had been lately received from America, he pointed to a brief description of the death of one of his school-mates who died in the Lord. Placing his finger on the dying request of this youth to his companions, viz.: “Prepare to meet your God,”—“Here,” said he, “*this is it*—I have not done it. Joseph has gone to heaven, and

I not prepared to go there; I not mind his last words."

Long had he been halting between two opinions: the Holy Spirit striving with him, and his conscience never allowing him to rest since he had first heard of the great salvation; yet he had never resigned all for Christ. When asked if he would like to go to America, he replied in the affirmative; and, when told that it was possible he might have such a privilege, he was quite delighted. For a few moments he manifested the most unbounded joy. But suddenly his whole nature seemed changed, and deep gloom chased away every sign of joy. "Oh," said he, while the tears rolled down his sable cheeks, "how can I go to Christian America without new heart? How can I tell the people who send us the gospel that I not obeyed it? *They* will expect me to love God." This thought seemed to add greatly to his sorrow, and diminished the pleasure that the prospect of visiting a civilized and Christian country at first gave him.

Children in our happy land cannot imagine the eager interest with which natives of a heathen country listen to every thing which re-

lates to a civilized and enlightened people. Sometimes they think that all the inhabitants have great supernatural power, and that the heathens are, in comparison, very small. But when they have been instructed by Christian missionaries; when they are taught by their books the knowledge of Christian nations, their industry, their modes of life, their great achievements in the arts and sciences, and, more than all, their love of order and religion, they seem greatly amazed, and long to see so strange a country.

With much of this feeling had John Wesley thought of the land from whence his teachers came, and ardently did he desire to see the American republic. He had studied about it in his geography; had treasured in his memory its States, their boundaries, capitals, mountains, rivers, &c. He had learned the history of its settlement, of the Indian wars, and of Independence. He had heard of the benevolence of English and American Christians, and he felt under obligation to the latter for all his privileges. Nor is it strange that those who have been rescued from heathenism through the instrumentality of Christian missions, can

scarcely imagine that any of the inhabitants of the lands from whence they originated should be living neglectful of the precepts of the gospel. Although our young friend knew to the contrary, yet he could not divest himself of this idea ; and he imagined that, like the man without a wedding garment in our Saviour's parable of the marriage-feast, every eye that he met in America would be fixed on him with the inquiry, "How came you from a Christian mission without Christ in your heart?"

On the 29th of April, 1846, John took leave of his kind missionary friends, Mr. and Mrs. Clarke, and embarked for America. Mr. Clarke accompanied them in a canoe through the raging surf to the brig that was to bear them over the Atlantic.

They were in the cabin when the message came for Mr. Clarke to return to the shore. His feelings overcame him, for he was giving the parting hand to one to whom he had been, for a brief space in life's history, a brother indeed. He was parting with one of his pupils, for whose salvation he had laboured and prayed. He was committing him to the perils of the



deep, without the evidence that he was prepared for a sudden summons into eternity: and sending him forth to new privileges and new temptations, without the evidence that he had grace to help him to improve the one or to resist the other.

He had pleaded with him in behalf of his people, and for the honour of the mission, to be faithful, and for his own happiness and safety to be reconciled to God. Silently and solemnly, and both in tears, they parted, never again to meet in this life; but we doubt not their voices now mingle together in the same songs around the Redeemer's throne, the missionary and the heathen convert, as "his crown of rejoicing."

John was naturally very decided, and this trait of character aided him in striving to change his early habits of inertness and indolence. He was conscious of the degradation of his countrymen, and he longed to be taught himself, in order that he might teach them. His studies were arranged for the voyage; and he resolved to be punctual in his lessons for each day, unless something uncommon should prevent. These were reading, defining, gram-

mar and moral science, besides the writing of a daily journal. He was at this time quite a good English reader, but more fluent in his own language. His speech was somewhat broken, and he had a good many gestures common to his people, to aid in expressing himself.

When he stepped on board the brig, he resolved that he would first of all "seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness." To this end, he determined that after his daily recitations, he would take his Bible, and seek some retired place in the vessel, where he might pour out his feelings to God in prayer. One day, soon after leaving his native shores, he came from the hold of the vessel (his place of retirement) to his friend in the cabin, and with a peculiarly expressive look, exclaimed, "Oh, I feel changed. I sorry : and I glad. I think I love the Saviour. I pray, but pray different from other times."

"John," said his friend, "do you think you are a Christian, and that God has forgiven your sins?"

"Oh," said he, "that is much to say,—a Christian ! I not say that."

"Well, what can you say, John?"

“I say I love God. I love to pray. I think he hear me. I love Jesus Christ. He seem good, so good, and I so bad. I have not word to tell all I feel!”

“What made you feel so, John?”

“I tell you. I take my Bible, go down in the hold; I sorry, and my heart troubled plenty, so I fear God cast me off for ever. I go up on deck. Cap’n say, ‘What’s the matter, John? You homesick?’ Then he laugh at me, but I not want to hear laugh, so I go back and pray more, God have mercy on my soul; and while I pray, I feel to love him, to praise him.”



## CHAPTER III.

FROM the marked change in John's character at this time, his increased prayerfulness, his abhorrence of sin, and his strict conscientiousness, there can be no doubt that this was the time when God "accepted him through his beloved." Yet we shall hereafter come to a period in his history, when he seemed to have a more satisfactory evidence of his Christian state.

Ever after the incident mentioned in the last chapter, however, he daily gave proof that "he had been with Jesus." The Bible was his chief pleasure, and he loved to read and inquire about its holy truths.

In compliance with the last request of Mr. Clarke, he learned one text of Scripture every day, and this was to be his subject of meditation for that day. During his residence in the United States, he continued this practice; but when sometimes omitted, he would learn a verse for every day in the week on the Sabbath, to atone for the omission.

Some of my young readers may like to see a



specimen of John's sea-journal, and a few extracts will follow :—

*“ Brig Smithfield, June 15, 1846.*

“ Last week the captain, first mate, and all the sailors told me, that the sea have a king called Neptune ; that when he come to a vessel, and see a boy that had not been on sea before, he takes a razor and shaves him. In the evening, the mate told me to buy a box of wine to present to the king when he should come on board ; but I told them I did not believe in Neptune, as I never heard any thing about him nor read a history of him ; but when I had so said, the captain got up and took a book, and found the page, and gave it to me to read. I did read it, and was little frightened because I read about Neptune in a book. I asked captain to give me something to defend myself with, but he told me I must not trouble myself to have battle with the king ; because gun, cutlass, pistol have no effect upon him. The next morning the captain told me Neptune went on board, but when I shall go back to Africa then the king shall catch me. Then I remember what Mrs. Clarke told me about one of our boys who went to England, and the sailors so deceived him.

“*June 22.* Last Sunday, after I recite my Sunday-school lesson, I took my hymn book and some tracts, and went on the deck and sat by myself. I was reading about a preparation for death.

“When I was reading, I began to consider about my poor father and mother, who died in their sins, without ever hearing of the precious gospel; and about my people, who are now in darkness, and selling each other.

“Then I began to consider about myself, and how thankful I ought to be to God for his goodness to me; how he took me from darkness among my brethren, and brought me into light. This not all, but he took me from my native country, and is now carrying me to America, where I may learn more. I hope that I shall be able to learn, and go back to Africa prepared to teach my people. I hope the Board will send out more missionaries before I go back.

“*June 29.* I thank my God that he has delivered me from this dreadful place. Last week we had bad weather in the gulf stream. One night I was asleep, and when I awoke there was great confusion on the ocean, thunder, wind and rain. The captain, mates and

all the sailors were on deck but I was frightened in my berth, and prayed to God to save my life that I might go back to Africa, and bear his name to my people."

So much for the heathen boy's diary.

On the 4th of July, 1846, this young African gazed for the first time on the shores of a Christian country. He looked from the deck of the vessel on the beautiful city of Providence, as it appeared spread out in glorious beauty before his astonished vision. "He felt," as he afterwards expressed it, "that his God had learned the American people the knowledge that made their country so great as it was."

While riding in the cars from Providence to Boston, the greatest astonishment, almost amounting to fear, was portrayed on his countenance; and when in the streets of Boston he rode by the Common, and saw the thousands there collected for the celebration of the day of our national independence, he could only gaze and rub his eyes, as if to assure himself that he was really awake; for he had never imagined such a scene.

A few days after his arrival, when questioned

about his first impressions of America, especially of his feelings while riding in the cars, he replied :

“ At first I think I dream, then I fear. I look round, and see every thing beautiful, houses cars, ladies, gentlemen, all look beautiful. Then I begin to think what great things God had taught the American people, and of the steam that caused the cars to move, without any thing else to draw them. Then I am amazed, it so wonderful ; and I think, if God made this people know so much, that they do so many fine things, what kind of place must heaven be, that he make all himself ! ”

He was then asked what were his thoughts when he saw so many thousands of people on Boston Common.

“ Oh ! ” said he, “ I did not think at all, I feel all same as a fool. ”

And no wonder ; he was as one suddenly brought out of darkness into dazzling light, the splendour of which revealed his own inferiority, and made him feel, in comparison with the wisdom of an enlightened people, that he knew nothing, and such feelings wholly overcame him.

Until now, he had lived as it were in a wil-



derness, he had roved among the forest trees of his own native land, played in the bush, and amused himself on the beach watching the dashing surf. He had paddled his canoe on his country rivers, had visited the neighbouring towns and hamlets; but he had never seen any of the arts and sciences of a cultivated people; except in the noble vessels that came to his shores, and the little he had seen at the mission. And in reference to what he had heard, he could say, "The half was not told me."

After John had spent a few weeks in observing the manners and customs of the country, he became deeply anxious to be improving in useful knowledge.

Mr. Clarke had expressed a wish that he might learn the art of printing, as a printer was much needed at the mission, and now all his desires seemed concentrated upon the attaining this object. While waiting for an opportunity, it was thought advisable that he should attend school, a decision which seemed to give him much pleasure.

Accordingly, he sought and gained admission to the West Grammar School, at Newburyport, where his studious and amiable deport-



ment secured the friendship and respect both of the teachers and scholars. The boys of this school deserve a passing tribute for their kindness and attention to this African stranger. Among them he learned his first lessons of youthful American character, and they were very favourable. He always remembered this school, and often spoke of it with much interest; and the teachers and companions of his studies held a high place in his regard. Although of a different nation, he won their respect and esteem; while they in return secured his gratitude and love.

He was strictly conscientious, so much so, that when he had been creating a merry laugh among his companions, by talking in his own language, or relating to them the manners and customs of his people, he would often leave them with a sad heart, saying to himself, "I fear I have done wrong."

One evening, some little boys wished him to play "the schoolmaster." As his language was broken, great laughter was excited. They went away to amuse themselves by a repetition of the scene to their friends, but John went to his room to weep and mourn that he had,

as he said, "played and forgot God." That night he could not sleep, but repeatedly arose to "beg God to forgive his great sins." Thus wonderfully had the gospel quickened his conscience, that in his early childhood was so dormant and unsusceptible.

Although at this time he seemed to enjoy prayer, and the study of the Bible beyond all books, and acknowledged that the change was great in his feelings since the time he thought he found God on board of the vessel, yet he would never admit that he was a Christian. Sometimes he felt that he had peace with God, but he thought he could see the evidences of Christian character more clearly delineated in the word of God than he could find them in his own heart, and he desired not to be deceived regarding his state. "I read," he would often say, "of a 'witness of the Spirit,' but I have not had it in my heart, so that I may know I am a Christian."

Our heavenly Father seemed to be leading him in a way that he knew not, and often left him to almost insupportable sorrow; but with faith akin to that of the Syro-phœnician woman, while he received no answer to his pray-

ers for deliverance, he appeared to gather strength from each repulse, and, sensible of his own unworthiness, the more earnestly to plead "Truth, Lord, yet the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from the master's table."

As it was feared the kind attentions he received might excite his pride, he was frequently cautioned on this subject. But he would as often reply, with the deepest signs of feeling, "What can make me proud, when all things and little children teach me all time that I poor and know nothing?"

The following is taken from a letter written to one of the missionaries, while he was at school in Newburyport:

"I am greatly obliged to you for your letter, which I received last night. It now has become my duty to answer it. All the school-boys are kind to me. Some of them bring me apples and pears and peaches and other kinds of fruit; but I do not eat them myself, as you told me I must be careful about eating fruit. I feel anxious to learn the trade, for you know how much our mission needs a printer; and, when I think that I cannot be long in this country,

though it please me very much to go to school, yet I rather learn the trade. You must not think that your kind advice is forgotten, as you told me I must be thankful to God for all his goodness in giving me the kind friends that make me the presents; so I do. I am more thankful to God who gives me *all*, and, above all, for his great present he gave to the world, even 'his only Son to die for sinners.' "

The following are extracts from a letter to his companions in Africa, dated August 21, 1846 :

" Since I came to this country, I never forget you, boys and girls. I always think about you all, especially our poor benighted countrymen, who are now in the region and shadow of death. And thus they are going on without the knowledge of the Bible, which is the most precious thing. Oh, my dear friends, how sorry I am when I see so many white people are against sending missionaries to Africa. On this subject I will advise you all, that you will try to please Mr. and Mrs. Clarke. Try to be good boys. Be kind to each other; also to our countrymen; knowing that 'whatsoever



good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.' This is the verse I said to Mr. Clarke in my lesson a short time ago.

"I think you will all want to know how I feel about the blessed Saviour. When we were on the voyage, I felt to love this great Being who hath done so much for us, and also I felt that I was one of his lambs. But now, my dear friends, I very sorry, and shame to tell, that I not feel just the same now; but I am praying that the Lord will assist me by his grace and Holy Spirit, and give me the same feelings.

"I have been to African Society. There were numbers of ladies making clothes for you boys and girls. What a blessing we may all think it is, that God put it into the hearts of these good people to spend their time in sewing for boys and girls they never saw. The people here are very kind to me; very much indeed. This country shows the mighty works of the Lord. When I look around and see all these beautiful buildings, then I wish you to see them too. . . . Ice is hard as stone, and white like loaf-sugar, but burn 'like fire.'"



## CHAPTER IV.

FIVE months passed away, and there seemed no prospect of securing a desirable place where John might learn the art of printing.

It was the last week in November, and while rough and cold winds blew without, a pleasant circle was gathered at evening around a cheerful fireside. Our young friend was among them, evidently struggling to hide some secret sorrow that preyed upon his feelings. He had been told a few days before, that, as a way for his farther improvement had not been opened in this country, he had better endeavour to prepare his mind to return. He had remonstrated with earnestness: pleading the wants of the mission, and of his poor, ignorant people, crying, "How can I go back to my heathen countrymen and carry them nothing?"

He was urged to commit his way unto the Lord, to trust in his providence, and to believe that "all things would work together for

his good," and that, if it was God's will, he would yet learn the art of printing in the United States. This view of God's guidance comforted him, and he appeared to throw himself more unreservedly upon his heavenly Father. During the evening allusion was made to a vessel about to sail, and he was asked if he was willing then to go? The tears flowed freely, while in vain he attempted to reply; but when he could command his voice he answered, "I willing to go back to my country. I not feel bad to go *now*, for God not open my way here; and I willing to go if I but know that I am Christian. I not want to go away from this Christian country, not knowing if God have pardoned my sins."

He was asked, "if he had not often felt that he had peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, and if he did not indulge some hope in Christ?"

"Yes," he replied, "sometimes; but I not feel right, and I troubled great deal. Sometime I think bad thoughts; I not pray good; my heart not in right place, and in meeting I sometime forget where I am; then I groan in my heart for my sins."

When asked how the Saviour appeared to him, he answered slowly, but feelingly,

“Very precious. I love him, and when I think about him I sorry I not resemble him, and not try to please him more; and when I think about my people, I wish I was good Christian, that I might tell them things they don't know.”

The interesting conversation that followed, revealed to those who heard it strong evidences of Christian character, and convinced them that God had begun a work in him that he would carry on till the day of Jesus Christ.

He seemed to possess a meek and humble spirit, and was strict in condemning his own faults. Weary of the bondage of sin, he panted for entire conformity to the will of God, but he did not feel that he had attained an assurance of his acceptance with Christ.

Fearing that his days were numbered in a Christian country, he laid his case more earnestly before God, pleading, if he must return home, that he might, before he left these shores, receive the Holy Spirit, “to witness with his spirit that he was born of God.”

Arrangements were about being made to se-

cure him a passage in the above-mentioned vessel, when, through the kindness of some friends, a gentleman of Boston became acquainted with his case, and kindly offered to take him into his printing-office, under his own care.

This benevolent offer was gratefully accepted as a direct token of God's overruling providence; and on the 1st of December, 1846, John became a stranger in the great city of Boston, without a single familiar acquaintance. But his heart seems full of thankfulness to kind friends, and more than all to his God, that he had at last attained his ardent desires.

Some extracts of letters to different friends will show his prevailing state of mind.

The following, contains expressions of gratitude to a gentleman of Newburyport, who kindly gave him his board while attending school in that place :

“ I will write these few lines to you to thank you for all your kindness, and Miss C. for her's. I hope the Lord will bless you both for all your goodness to me. The Lord, in his providence, has been kind to me, and put me in



a printing-office, where I am kindly received. I very much enjoy learning the trade.”

To another :

“In your last letter you desired me to keep a journal; and to commence letters for Africa. The journal, I think, I shall try to keep; but what must I write to my dear teachers? What must I tell Mr. Vonbrun, Lewis, and all my dear playmates? Shall I write and tell them the same that I told in my first letters, or tell them that I now am sitting by the hot stove, and enjoying the pleasant heat? Shall I tell them I wearing great garments for fearing of Master Jack Frost, who burned my ears twice to-day, while going to the office? I do not think you will like such stories to go to Africa; and myself shall be ashamed to write such letter. Now what shall I tell them? They will expect to hear good report of my never-dying soul, and what must I write them? Our Bassa people say, ‘N mo ne aw dye zimi nye.’ They use these words when they have not perfect done what is their duty. For, sometimes I feel as if God had heard my prayers, and I love him, and seem to hate all my wicked ways



and thoughts. But sometimes, the sins I dislike take possession of my heart. The verse I learn last Friday make deep impression, which was 'the sting of death is sin.' "

In a letter, written wittily, to a little boy, he gives what may be a profitable hint to many a young letter-writer :

"Joseph, your letter have good many says, mother says, and Mary says, while your own says are few. I very much please with their says, but your own says ought to be more than theirs."

"To Mr. E. F.

*Boston, January 18, 1847.*

"When I think about all your kindness, both in writing to me, and when I was in N., and about all my kind friends, then I feel more thankful to my heavenly Father, for all his goodness to me in this strange land.

"I still read my Bible, and learn one verse a day. Some days of last week shall never be forgotten. In the night I awoke and prayed to God, and found him present. I felt as though he was present. I do not mean that

I see him but I feel that he was near. I prayed earnest and wept, but I feel that all my tears are as dust before the mighty wind, and that I deserve God's anger. I feel sorry when I think about my poor countrymen who are in the thick darkness, and the great responsibility which rests on me. I always think about them, and feel very anxious when I shall go back to teach them, but more I think about them, more I think about myself, for Bible says, 'cast out the mote which is in your eye, before look in thy brother's eye.'

"Mr. Howe said this morning, that I very much improved. I can set five sticks full of types without any error."



## CHAPTER V.

EARLY in the month of January, 1847, John received remarkable answers to his prayers, which were continually ascending to God, for the "witness of his Spirit." He described himself as burdened with a weight too heavy to be borne, so that he literally hungered and thirsted for righteousness.

Now he seemed to obtain that which he had been seeking, viz.: a clearer manifestation of the love of God to himself; and his "peace flowed like a river."

Before this precious manifestation, he had come to the conclusion that he was sinning against his heavenly Father, in doubting of his acceptance with him; "for," said he, "I read in the Bible that God giveth his Spirit by measure, and perhaps he has measured it to me, and I do wrong not to feel willing to take crumbs, if he give me crumbs." But he could not rest until he had more convincing evidence that he was united to Christ, "as the branch

is united to the vine." From this period he seems truly to have rejoiced in God with undoubting faith. He loved to search the holy word of God, and to treasure in his memory its sacred truths. Consequently, he was very apt in quoting texts, for it was common for him, when arguing on any subject, to draw his proofs from this holy source, invariably turning to "the law and the testimony."

John Wesley was supported in this country nearly two years, by charitable contributions from Sunday-schools, and donations from individuals and societies. He seemed to be peculiarly the child of Providence, for often his pathway would appear very obscure, and sometimes expenses were incurred with only a remote probability of payment; but "He who provideth meat for all" wonderfully secured to this young stranger every needed good. Oftentimes, unexpectedly and surprisingly did the requisite sum of money, or the articles needed, come to hand when most desired.

Sabbath-school children, who were interested in contributing for John Wesley, the once-heathen African youth, will feel encouraged, while reading these pages of his brief history,



to know that God allowed them to be instruments of good, to one who was so anxious to learn, in order that he might be useful to others. For although he lived not to teach his people, no doubt the privileges he gained by their beneficence better prepared his thirsting spirit for the eternity into which he was so soon called. And although they cannot do any more for *him*, they may sometimes think of his heathen people, and make efforts for their good, in such ways as Providence may point out; and if not for them, for others at home and abroad, who are perishing for the lack of the bread which came down from heaven.

The following letter was written to a Sabbath-school, as a thank-offering for a donation:—

*Boston, February 23, 1847.*

To the Portland Second Baptist Sabbath-school:—

Mrs. C—— received some money from you for my benefit, for which I greatly oblige to you for your kindness, and thankful to God who put it in your hearts to do so. It please me very much indeed, because I am very anxious to learn something in this country, so when I shall return back to Africa I shall be able to teach my poor benighted countrymen,



and thus by the means of your assistance I shall be able to do something. I think you shall like to know about the Africans, and I shall be glad to tell you what I know about them, especially the tribe to which I belong. This tribe is called the Bassas. Bassa extends about one hundred miles on the coast, and contains from one hundred and fifty to two hundred thousand inhabitants, and millions of African people are heathen. I mention this, because I want you, American children, to know how many human souls are in darkness.

They know not their Maker, the great God, the maker and preserver of all things. Nor know they the Sabbath-day—the day which the Almighty rested from his works of creation. And God blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it; because that in it he rested from all his works. All days are like to them. In the first place, I said they know not their Maker. It is true, they know that there is a true God, but they do not obey him. Their idea is this, which I will tell you. For they think God is very far above us, and when we in danger and call him, he cannot hear us speedily and come to deliver us. They know not that he is every-

where, as well as God in heaven. So when they kill their goats, sheep and oxen, they take their horns and make their gods, which they call *gregree*. These gregrees they tie around them, and carry wherever they go. Their idea is, that through these gregrees God will hear them when they call, and come in their gregrees. They know not that by Jesus Christ only men can be saved.

I hope when you shall grow up, you will pity the poor African heathen, and be willing to send the gospel, or to go out as missionaries and teach them the solemn truth which is contained in the holy Bible. And again, it ought to learn you to be thankful to God for all the blessings which he has bestowed on you—to be born in a Christian land, where you are blessed with the light of the gospel, and to be willing to help your missionary friends, who are willing to take their life in their hands, and for the benefit of the heathen, and for the responsibility of your Christian country, and that your country might be more blessed. Oh! how thankful you ought to be to God for all his goodness, to give you your own good parents, teachers and Sabbath-schools! And you re-

ceived instruction every Sabbath. Oh! wish I have instruction like some of you have. But I thank my God, through his Son Jesus Christ, for the spiritual instruction which he have instructed me. I feel now that my sins have been forgiven. What an easy thing it is to become the child of God, if we go to him with humble and contrite hearts. A few weeks ago, I was asked if I love the Lord. I could hardly look up, but bowed my head down for sorrow. Oh! wretched I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death? Then the Spirit of God spoke in my mind, and said, "My son, give me thy heart," for such a one I came to save. And I remember the words of our Saviour, "He that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." And I said, "Lord, if thou suffer me to be thy chosen vessel, and to bear thy name to my heathen people, I will with all my heart." I prayed, and when I ceased praying I feel as if was in new world. I can see with new eyes, hear with new ears, and understand with new heart. I exclaimed the praises of my God and my Redeemer,

"How glorious is our heavenly King,  
Who reigns above the sky!"

Oh, said I, wish I have thousand mouths to praise my Redeemer, the Lamb of God which was slain to receive power and glory! Oh, said I again, wish I have more soul to give my Redeemer! How good is our God for not cast us off when we were sinners! When I review all my past time, I am astonished, and know not which to wonder at. Oh, what will be the lot of those who have been long hear the word of God, then they do not do it!"

The following is an extract from a letter to a friend.

"How great is God our God! How merciful! How long-suffering! How holy is his character, how great is his goodness, justice and holiness! How tender is our Redeemer! 'He hath done all things well.' He has chosen the impenitent sinner, who deserved nothing but his wrath, to be his child. Glory to God that he desires not the death of sinners, but that they may repent and be saved."

To his Bassa friend, WILLIAM CROCKER.

*Boston, April 13, 1847.*

DEAR FRIEND:—I have not forgotten about you since I am away. I am always thinking



about you. It was a great and solemn thing when we came on board the brig Smithfield to sail for America. Oh, how sorrowful I was that day, when I saw Mr. Clarke was weeping, and telling me to be a good boy. My friend, I could not bear it, and I also burst into tears. I thought I should go back with Mr. and Mrs. Clarke, to Bassa, and tell you boys about the Gold Coast. But I wish to write you about our immortal souls. I was glad to find, in reading your letter, that you have faith in the Lord. Since I experienced religion I always prayed to God that you might become a Christian. But the Lord has visited us at the same time, therefore his name must be praised. Remember that we are not of this world. We are pilgrims, and are travelling to the world unknown. Pray often that God may multiply your faith, and give you the breastplate of righteousness to resist the tyranny of the devil. Put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of Satan.

There is something very pleasing to God, which I hope we will try to have. It is to be humble, penitent, obedient, slow to anger and forgiving one another, even as Christ has for-



given us ; but he hateth pride, for “God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble.” Proud heart is an abomination to the Almighty. In the text you heard Mr. Clarke preach from, there are great many things to be considered. “Because the love of God constrains us,” and I deeply hope you will bear it in your mind always ; and strive to do good in helping your friends who have been so long suffering for our benefit.

Think of the great sacrifice they have made for that dark land ! See what Sabbath-schools are doing here now. The children save their little mites, and put them into the contribution box, to send the gospel to the heathen. Cannot you large boys do the same, and support one or two of the small boys ? May the Lord bless you and continue to visit the school.

I am your affectionate friend, J. K.W.

The following letter from one of John's Bassa friends is introduced, as a specimen of the improvement of the boys at the mission, and also because it gives some information of the state of the country at that time. It is written in a neat and plain style.

*Bexley, December 18, 1847.*

John K. Wesley.

DEAR FRIEND:—Your favourable epistle came to hand safely; and how very happy I was to hear from you; and also how glad was our playmates to hear from you, and to see your writing. For this reason I read your letter among them Sabbath evening, because I received it precisely when the evening meeting was out. I seated myself on the window, I mean the window we used to look from on Winders's Island. Our school does well this year. I assist the teachers, and all of us seem to improve. Some of the scholars at the school at Turo went away on account of the war between Turo, Kaigma and Duawi. They have had a dreadful fight. General Tio, the commander-in-chief, came with his army to Turo, burned one of king Duawi's villages, and intended to take the capital; and to that he and his army proceeded. But before they could reach the town they were met by king Soldier's people. Then they fought dreadfully, and many were killed and wounded on both sides. General Tio and his soldiers went back without reaching the town, as they expected, thinking it best to retreat. . . .

Pray for me, that the Lord Jesus Christ may pardon my sins. I will try to pray for myself.

Your most affectionate friend,

GAWWI ZEDIN.

Extracts from John's letter, in reply to the above :—

. . . “My dear friend, if we do not love God for all the blessings he has given us for our happiness in this world, we are bound to love him for his Son's sake, and for the sake of his goodness, justice and holiness. We ought to love him more, because God is love, Now, do you love God? If you are not a Christian, then why? Because God hate you? No: he is now ready to receive you, and now invites you to come. Will you come to Jesus? His arms are open, and ready to receive you: or will you remain in your sins? Oh! how dreadful to meet your Judge without a preparation; and to hear that awful word, ‘Depart from me into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.’ Oh! what dreadful language it is: everlasting fire; ‘where the worm dieth not.’ Will you not come to Jesus?

He is willing to bless you. 'Now is the accepted time—now is the day of salvation.' For you and I, and for the world, the Saviour has been crucified on the cross; and by looking to him we may be saved. Resolve, and come lay at the foot of the cross, and say, 'If I die, at thy feet will I die.' Will you come now to this compassionate Saviour? He desires not the death of sinners, but that they may repent and live. Perhaps some of the boys will say, 'Well, if the Lord desires not the death of sinners, I will live in my sins, for he will save me.' But it is not so, my friends. Search the Scriptures. Read the twenty-ninth chapter of Proverbs, and see what is there said about the wicked. Also the twelfth chapter of Ecclesiastes, ninth and fourteenth verses. 'Rejoice, oh, young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes; but know thou that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.' For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good thing or evil.

"You desired me to tell you what I have



seen in this country. My friend, there are so many things to describe in this country, that I scarcely know which to commence with. To tell you about the cars, steamboats, or this great city of Boston, and its beautiful buildings, temples, and their tall steeples ; or about the bridge which connects Boston and Charlestown ; or relate to you an account of the Sabbath-schools ; or give you a description of Bunker Hill Monument, which is from two hundred and forty to two hundred and sixty feet high, and perhaps from eighty to one hundred feet around its base, and is built of granite, &c. &c."





## CHAPTER VI.

IN May, 1847, the kind family in which John Wesley boarded could no longer accommodate him, and he was for a season somewhat cast down in view of his "future lot." But soon again he felt that his heavenly Father was interested in his case, for a pleasant boarding place was secured for him, where he felt that he had indeed a home; for, as he often expressed himself regarding it, "all try to make me happy." The kindnesses he here received from each member of the family, one of whom kindly aided him in his studies, left an indelible impression on his heart.

His expressions of gratitude were ever fervent towards Mr. Howe, who he felt was teaching him what would enable him to spend a useful life. When speaking of him, he would say, "Oh, he very good man, and so kind to me: he try to learn me much."

Extract from a letter to Miss C. F.:—

“*May, 1847.*

“I will give you an account of our visit to the Farm Sabbath-school on Thompson’s Island, in Boston harbour. The gentleman I went with carried some idols, and a Bible, (which was the means of converting a great many on the island of Pickan,) to show to the scholars as a curiosity, and they were very much pleased with the stories which accompanied these curiosities. Many of the children seemed to pity the poor heathen, by the appearance of their faces, and they attentively listened to what was said to them.

“After the close of this very interesting school, we took a pleasant walk around the field. The island is in a very beautiful situation, having a view of all the cities around, and the ships and boats going out and coming in.”

To another friend, dated May, 1847:—

“I will give you some account of my visit to the Lowell Congregational Sabbath-school. In the first place, I must thank my God for all his blessings, goodness and mercy to me,

both temporally and spiritually. In assisting me by his Holy Spirit so that I can readily answer the questions which are put to me. There were between three and four hundred present, both teachers and scholars. . . .

“I visit these Sabbath-schools, not because I love the praise of men, or that they may think well of me. But, Mrs. C., my heart feels to do something to promote the missionary work, to excite the good spirit of the people to carry on the work which they have undertaken to do for the heathen. And more, for the glory of God, as himself hath said that his gospel should be spread all over the world. So every one who feels that he is ‘a new creature in Christ Jesus’ is bound to trade with as much as his Lord has intrusted into his hands.

“Now I hope the Lord will bless and reward you for all your kindness to me in this strange land, and that you have helped me to get the trade which I so much desired.”

During the year 1847, John applied himself entirely to his business, and his hours of leisure were closely devoted to his books and to

letter-writing. There was a complete transformation in his character. He never regarded time in his native land. His people scarcely note its flight; therefore they regret not its departure. But now he felt that every moment was precious, and he was constantly striving to lay up, in the store-house of memory, that which would make him in future time useful to his people. His desire for knowledge was unbounded, and he was even unwilling to spare time for necessary recreation. In the summer of 1847 he was requested to spend a few weeks in Newburyport, and thus for a time rest from his labour; but it was only by a decided negative to his request to return that he was detained a fortnight, and during that time he learned daily two long lessons. He never needed prompting in this respect; for, contrasting himself with the youth of this country, he so far felt his own inferiority that he became an indefatigable and diligent scholar. His decided improvement in a short time may be noticed in his letters, which are more grammatical and comprehensive, although the peculiar construction of his own language is apparent even in his more refined use of ours.



From a letter to a friend, dated September 9, 1847:

. . . . . "I have no doubt it was very pleasing sight to you to see those dear friends whom you did not expect to see again. How marvellous are the Lord's doings! I was thinking about the joy of heaven: as it is very delightful to see those whom we had not seen for years, what must it be in heaven to meet those who had parted from us a great many years! To meet them around the throne of glory, and to join with them to sing the song of Moses and the Lamb! *There* shall we live with those beloved ones, and never separate from each other again, but live for ever and ever, and sing with them the song which neither tongue nor heart can express nor comprehend. I was just thinking about 'Joseph B.,' my well-known schoolmate and beloved friend, who is now in that happy land. When I think about such things, they make me agonized in such feelings that I cannot express. To meet those beloved ones whom we once called father, (alluding to the missionaries,) and they treated us as though they were our own fathers; but through the Lord Jesus, after



long suffering and tribulations, they have overcome the world; they have gained the victory, and are more than conquerors.

“I attended meeting last Sabbath, and heard a sermon on the spirit of Christ. ‘If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his,’ was the text. It was preached by my well-acquainted minister, who uttered his speech so plainly that I understood. When we go from meeting, he explained the whole subject to me. He gave the explanation of the spirit, and what it is and how to possess it. That the spirit is equivalent to Christ’s mind. The sentiment was, when our Saviour was in this world he did a great many works for God, and did not raise himself too high for them. When he healed the sick, he charged them not to tell it to the world: ‘See thou tell no man, but go thy way and glorify God.’ He knew whom he worked for, therefore he desired not the praise of men. Ought not Christians to follow the same example, and work for their heavenly Master in secret, and not count themselves too high for it? The application was, that, when Christians have engaged in a very small work, which is not worthy to compare

with what our Saviour has done for them, they raise themselves high for it. There are a great many passages connected with this, one of which I will mention. It was when the children of Israel were on their long, tedious journey to the land of promise. For the wanting of water, they grew angry with their leader, Moses, who was the meekest man. And he wrought a miracle with an ungrateful heart, without asking the aid of the Giver of all things, by smiting the rock which brought forth the fountain of water which refreshed their murmuring hearts; and the Lord Jehovah swore that Moses should not enter the land flowing with milk and honey. A proof that Christians must work for God with cheerful heart, and not count themselves too high for any thing, for their reward is in heaven."

John had no companions of his own age in the United States, and he chose rather his books and those friends with whom he daily associated. But sometimes he felt lonely, as the stranger ever must, far away from home and kindred; but hope brightened his pathway, while his Christian peace flowed like a

river. He had not the elasticity of feeling that belongs to our northern temperament; therefore, when sick or disappointed, he was inclined, for a season, to yield to despondency.

Allusion is made in the following letter to this state of feeling.

*Boston, December 31, 1847.*

DEAR FRIEND:—Your favour of last week has been gratefully received, and more especially as it contains such good and welcome instruction, and to learn that your interest for me is great as it ever was. I never felt so easy as now. It causes me much gratitude to God that he has given me such a good friend, who feels so anxious for my best good.

Sometimes I felt lonesome and sad, and dare to say that I have no friend; and there is none that careth for me. But when I think about the goodness of God, his friendship, the friend of the stranger, the Father of the fatherless, his guidance, his supporting hand, mercies, &c. who clothes the grass, and a single sparrow falling to the ground is not forgotten before Him; and when I thought that I am more than the sparrow, I felt self-condemned; and to exclaim, undone, undone; “God be merciful unto me, a sinner.”

When I think about the goodness of God to me, to send his missionary servants in my youthful days, that I might learn his laws; and that through his mercy, I was induced by Christian friends to go with them, when I did not know any thing about him; was taken from my brethren in my native land, and brought to this Christian country, where I trust I enjoy the light of God's countenance through the redemption of Innocent Blood; when I think about these things, I feel sorry that I cannot love him as he loves me."

As it was thought probable that John would leave this country for his native shores, in the latter part of 1847, or early in 1848, he was anxious, if he returned so soon, to make a profession of religion among his own people, a desire which fully accorded with the sentiments of many of his friends. Indeed he had been waiting to see what the Lord would have him do.

On the 29th of January, 1848, he commenced keeping a journal of his secret feelings. Before this, it had been decided that he might probably tarry yet longer in America. His first article seems to have been an expression of his feelings regarding a profession of his faith.



Under date of January 30, he writes,

“This (the Sabbath) is the day on which our Saviour rose from the dead. My mind has been convicted. It tells me if I do not confess what the Lord has done for my soul, that he will deny me before my Father and the holy angels ; which affects me most keenly.

“*Monday, Jan. 31.* The Lord has been precious to my soul to-day. . . . In the midst of my happiness some thoughts entered in my mind which trouble me very much. I had conversation with . . . . about joining the church. He asked me if I thought the church would accept me, that perhaps some of the members may think I am not a Christian. And now my soul is troubled, what shall I do ? O thou that searchest the heart, ‘thou knowest my down-sitting and my uprising, and art acquainted with all my ways.’ Search me and know me ; and if my hope be false, and I am nothing but deceiver, ‘O thou that dwellest in the heavens,’ destroy this vain hope, and place my feet on the Rock of Ages, which is higher than I. I attended the young people’s prayer-meeting this evening, and spoke of the goodness of God to me.”



## CHAPTER VII.

THE state of this young Christian's mind is best seen in the spirit of his diary.

"*Feb. 1.* My soul has been distressed about my poor, benighted countrymen; my poor father and mother who have died in heathenism. Lord, incline Christian hearts to feel for the heathen; also raise me up to be useful to my own people.

"*Feb. 2.* I received a letter from Mrs. C—— this morning, which puts my mind in a state of quandary whether to go to Newburyport and join the church there, or here. Lord, I leave all to thee. Instruct thou me; and let me do that which is acceptable unto thee.

"*Feb. 3.* I awoke last night and found myself in the Divine presence. How dreadful is thy gate, O Zion, and how precious it is to be in thy presence, O thou that dwellest within! What a delightful thing it is to be a pilgrim to the heavenly city; there cherubim and seraphim, and the holy angels, cast down their

golden crowns and worship him that sitteth on the throne, saying, Holy, holy, holy!

“My mind has troubled me very much; conscience tells me to perform my duty without any delay.

“*Newburyport, Friday 4th, evening.* I left Boston at half-past eleven, and, through the providence of God, have arrived here in good health. I have just returned from the church-meeting. They have accepted me as a candidate for baptism. May the Lord help me to live a Christian life!

“*Sunday, Feb. 6.* The weather has been very bad, snow two or three feet deep; and the river is frozen, yet none of these things move me, or will prevent me from performing my duty. Though the winds blow and storms are beating, I trust in him whose command the wind and storm obey.

“*2 o'clock.* I have been buried with my Lord in baptism. May the Lord help me that I may live to his glory.

“*7 o'clock.* I have just returned from communion. Oh! how have I longed for this solemn supper! I long for thy salvation, O God! Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? I am

willing to take up my cross and follow thee. But, O my God, if it is acceptable to thee, I should like to be thy labourer to work in thy vineyard, even that dark field, that I may be an instrument of the promotion of the eternal good of the immortal souls in Africa.

“*Monday, 7.* I feel that I have performed my duty. My mind is easy, calm and happy.

“*Feb. 20.* It is Sabbath, or ‘communication between earth and heaven.’ I never felt so before, as I have been to-day. It has been a precious day to me. I feel the influences of the Divine power. I trust I have the measure of his Spirit. I attended meeting three times to-day. The sermons were very deep, and I did not gain much on them, (as many great words were used, and I am not well acquainted with the English language.) In the evening prayer-meeting I could not resist speaking of the goodness of God.

“*Feb. 27.* It cause me much gratitude to God to learn, that some at the House of Refuge have been under conviction, through what I said. I wish God would use me as an unworthy instrument in the eternal good of some poor souls in America, but when the opportu-

nity offered, I was reluctant to do good. God forbid that I should hide my talent in the earth, that I should not trade with that which thou hast trusted in my hands. Forgive me my unfaithfulness.

“*March 13.* Received some letters last week from my teacher and schoolmates in Africa. They write that God is blessing the mission. Some of the scholars have obtained a hope, and have been baptized, and others were serious. I hope they will not rest till they have found the blessed Saviour, and drank of that water of life which will be in them a well of water springing up into everlasting life.”





## CHAPTER VIII.

UNDER date of March 8th, John wrote to the friend who had charge of him in this country, earnestly requesting the privilege of three years' study at school, in the United States, pleading that his anxiety was so great for his people that he could not rest, for he had vowed unto the Lord that he would give himself to break unto them the bread of eternal life, and now his education was not sufficient for such a work. The letter told of a spirit burning with anxiety for his heathen countrymen, and of earnest desires for his own improvement, and preparation for such a work ; and this, he said, made him perfectly unhappy, as he never could enjoy himself again till he should be placed in a situation to secure this object.

He was reminded, in the reply, how manifestly he had seen his heavenly Father's hand marking out his path in this land of his exile, and how often he had made the dark places light ; that now there seemed no prospect for the accomplishment of such a desire, as during



the latter months it had been harder to obtain the means for his support, and it sometimes seemed as if the way was hedged up; and he was reproved for his lack of confidence in his Lord and master. To which came the following feeling and humble reply :

*Boston, March 19, 1848.*

MY DEAR FRIEND:—I received your letter last Monday, and all it contains was welcome. It was my own request that you might reprove me when you do not see things as they ought to be. The proverb says, “He that hateth the reproof of the righteous is a fool.” Yes, my dear friend, I deserved the reproof for being unfaithful, for not committing myself to the righteousness of God. Yes, I reproof deserved, for being unhappy, and to write thus.

That regard of my best good, future welfare and usefulness, which you feel, call forth my warmest thanks to you, and gratitude to God, who has given me such a good friend, who loves me so well, and manifests his love in so many different ways. Your letter awakened in me the deepest anxiety to acquire learning; whether here, in Africa, or wherever God’s

providence may open. I am desirous to learn, for more than one reason. Yes, for more than one; for your happiness, and the joy of Christian friends in America, who have given their money to support me here. It is for my own happiness, the joy of angels, and to glorify my Redeemer. Yes, I need to be well qualified. If you shall see me turn perishing souls from their degraded superstitions, through the means of expounding this sacred volume, I have no doubt it will be your happiness, and you will feel that your labours were not vain in the Lord. I will, too, be the joy of your friends that their labours were not in vain, and they may feel to say, "It is better to give than to receive:" and there will be joy among the angels because one star is added to their Master's glory. And it will be a pleasure to me to be doing my Master's will, whose meat it was to do the will of his Father. My prayer and desire is, that God may do just what he thinks best with me.

I am happy that you still desire my best good.

Your unworthy,

J. K. WESLEY.

This was probably the last letter that John ever wrote.

In reference to his desire to attend school in the United States, he wrote his last paragraph in his journal ; although there are a few of his thoughts pencilled in a scrap-book, a month or two later than this date.

“*March 13.* O thou God of all grace, if these feelings are not from above, let it repent thee, and grant to thy servant a humble mind and heart, that he may meekly resign himself to thy will ; and unreservedly give himself wholly to thee. And if thou seest fit to use me as an instrument in thy hands, for the promotion of thy glory and the eternal good of some poor souls in Africa, I am willing with all my heart.”

During this winter John's health was remarkably good ; and he was constantly and actively employed, eager to make every moment count for his improvement. His spirits were bright and buoyant, and he seemed to exult in the hope that hereafter he should be able to do much for his benighted and degraded race.

In the last week of March, he took a severe cold, from the effects of which he never recovered. Probably, he had too severely taxed a

constitution which had not acquired strength by early endurance.

In his little book is the following notice of his last privilege of partaking of the Lord's supper :

*"1st Sunday in April.* Had another opportunity to-day to commemorate the Saviour's death. It was very solemn to me. Six were baptized and received into the church."

As he continued very feeble, about the middle of April, he was removed from Boston to Salem, where he stayed a few weeks ; and from thence again he repaired to Newburyport, where he again became an inmate of his first American home, where every thing that kindness could suggest was done for him until he sailed for his native land.

#### MEMORANDUM.

*"Salem, April 28.* The hands of the Lord are still upon me. The last two nights were very trying. Cough all the time. But my prayer is, that I may be humble, patient and willing to receive every thing that comes from on high. A doctor has been to see me, who seems to be very pleasant man.



“*May* 4. Last night Mrs. Clarke read to me Mr. Clarke’s journal from the Baptist Magazine. It was very interesting, and please me very much to hear good news from our mission, and makes me feel much gratitude to God for all he has done and is doing in that dark land.

‘Oh for a heart to praise my God!’

“Last night I awoke, and raised my heart to God. I tried to pray, but I could not; my head was very heavy and weak, and I could not keep my mind steady.

“*May* 13. Mrs. Clarke has gone to Boston, and thinks she shall bring my trunk, and I not go again to my trade. I have looked upon these things (leaving the trade) as trials; but for few days my eyes have been open to the things above, with much meditation and enjoyment in prayer. It is probable we shall only have a little time to stay in this country, if the Lord restores me.”

As John’s advancement in the art of printing was thought sufficient to make him useful at the mission, it was decided, before his illness, that it might be best for him to return during



the ensuing summer or autumn. But now that the hand of disease was laid heavy on him, the different physicians that were consulted advised his speedy return, as affording the only hope of his full restoration to health.

His Christian faith and patience shone in this illness. Uncomplainingly he bore his restless nights and turns of coughing that racked his frame, calmly saying, "God does all right."

One day, when asked if he thought he should recover, he answered, "Sometimes I think I may. I think, perhaps my God is trying me. I read, 'He scourgeth every son whom he receiveth;' and I think, perhaps now my time has come for trial. And another text say, 'Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he purgeth it that it may bring forth more fruit.' I think God saw that I was unfaithful, and now he purge me, and therefore I fear to say a word about my sickness, but pray all the time, when I can, for God to sanctify it, that I may be made better to live among and teach my poor people."

He was then asked, "if this should not prove the plan of God's dealings with him, and

this sickness should be unto death, if he thought he could acquiesce in his will."

"Oh, yes," said he, in reply, "I willing to be in God's hands. I think I willing to live or die, just as he thinks best."

Repeatedly did the same sentiments fall from his lips, when conversing on this subject, and always there seemed an habitual certainty within him that "God *would* do just right." Once, when questioned regarding his hope in Christ, he said, "I have never doubted since God was so good to me; when he gave me the witness of his Spirit. Sometimes my mind dark; but *always* I love my Saviour."

John had a very affectionate heart, and he loved those who excited his interest and gratitude. His regard was shown in the most acceptable way, and it would be well if every youth would consider that the best return which can be made to our friends is, to obey implicitly their slightest requests, where it can be done conscientiously, and to strive to save them any trouble or anxiety that might be even thoughtlessly occasioned.

The arrival of Mrs. Clarke from Africa, the last of May, with the painful intelligence of

the death of Mr. Clarke on the voyage, deeply affected him. He was preparing to return to his native country, and now he sadly realized that he should find no missionary teacher there, nor see again his early Christian friend and father. His feelings overcame him when he met with the bereaved Mrs. Clarke, and he could only sob and weep with her in silence. He felt that he had lost a dear friend, and that his countrymen, especially those under the influence of the mission, were severely smitten, and he mourned for them. Yet he said but little. His people were the burden of his thoughts; and it might, perhaps, with truth be said, that his anxiety for them consumed his life. Often has the writer heard him groan, as if in severe pain; and, when asked where he suffered, he would sigh out, "Oh, my people, my people!"

Soon after his baptism, he was found by himself, weeping bitterly; and, when asked what disturbed him, he cried, "Oh, I wish my people had become Christianized before I was born; for I feel that God requires much of me to perform for them, and I am weak and know nothing."

## CHAPTER IX.

WHEN John perceived that his strength was failing, and that his days were evidently numbered, if he continued in this northern latitude, he felt willing and even anxious to return, for he said he wished to see his kindred and companions once more ; and, if he had not long to live, he should like to die among his countrymen, for he had longed to tell them in his own language what God had done for his soul.

On the 13th of June, 1848, he embarked from Providence, in the brig *Smithfield*, (the same vessel that brought him out,) for his native land.

A letter from a missionary, who kindly attended upon him during the voyage, gives the following account of him when tossed on the ocean :

“For several days after we sailed, we thought John was improving. He seemed to revive ; but soon again evidently failed. He was able to converse but little. He told me



once his choice was to live till he reached home ; but, if his heavenly Father was not pleased to spare him, he was resigned. He afterwards told me that he was “resigned to all the will of God.” He called me to him one night, and gave me his charge for his friends, saying that he did not think he should live. I expected he would die during the night ; but the next day he appeared better, yet could not speak intelligibly, and showed signs of derangement. Mr. W. pronounced it a disease peculiar to the African climate.”

After the brig arrived off the African coast, as John still continued very ill and he could not be made comfortable on board, it was thought advisable to land him where he would soonest obtain a passage to his own home, the vessel being bound south for Gaboon. His derangement occasioned much care and trouble on board, and his feeble, suffering body required the rest of a still chamber ; therefore this seemed the best course that could be pursued. He was accordingly put ashore at Cape Coast, and the same missionary kindly provided for his comfort at a native boarding-house before



leaving him. But he was not permitted again to see his native home, nor his brother, whom he wished to talk to concerning his evil ways, and to point to the Saviour of the world; nor the dear companions of his studies, some of whom, during his absence, had tasted that the Lord was gracious, and whom he wished to urge to be *wholly* given up to the service of Christ; and others, who, after long hearing the word of life, were living neglectful of its solemn commands.

He went on shore, as we have said, at Cape Coast, on the 11th of August, and nothing more definite is known of his history than that, nineteen days afterwards, he died, calmly and quietly, at that place.

Though he died on the shores of his native land, it was among strangers, an hundred miles from his own Bassa home. He had a respectable Christian burial in the English Wesleyan Mission ground. His precise age at the time of his death is unknown; but it is presumed by those who were acquainted with his early history at the mission, that he might have been about seventeen years old.

“He being dead yet speaketh.” Will not

the young who may read this brief history of a once heathen youth be admonished by the pious sentiments that were planted in his heart, and governed his character, by that love to God which led him to consecrate himself wholly to his service, to “go and do likewise?”

His heart could not “sit still,” as he said, on account of the anxiety and sorrow he felt for the condition of his people, who were living in heathenism, without a knowledge of “Him who is the Way, the Truth and the Life.” He never felt at ease after he heard of the true God, till he repented of his sins and believed in the Saviour. And are you willing, who have all your days known the precious truths of the gospel, to reject them and the blessed Saviour, of whom they teach? Shall the heathen enter into the kingdom of heaven before you? Will you not hear the voice of the dead speaking to you; and be persuaded to seek the salvation of your never-dying souls?

Oh, how can Sabbath-School children, especially in these United States, trifle with the sacred instructions they receive; and the tender monitions of faithful teachers, who urge them to lay up for themselves treasures in

heaven, while the heathen are perishing for lack of their knowledge !

Come, young reader, and seek that religion that John sought and found ; and you too will not seek in vain. You will find “that peace which the world cannot give nor take away,” and which alone can make you resigned, like him, if early called to die. He desired not to live because he loved the pleasures of life ; but he did wish to live that he might be useful, and he was willing to suffer a great deal to accomplish this desire, but it pleased God to remove him to a brighter sphere.

That the perusal of the life of John Wesley may lead many to love and adore his Saviour, and to “search the Scriptures that they may find eternal life,” and that it may awaken a new and deeper interest for the salvation of his benighted tribe, is the fervent desire of the author.











